

Advising + Planning + Evaluating + Leading

Annual Activity Report for the Program Year Covering the Period June 1, 2012 – May 30, 2013

Program Year Overview: Forging Connections

As the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission's (SSCRPC) "cut line" to the upper right notes, the Commission's staff sees its mission as serving as an Advisor, Planner, Evaluator and Leader for the many jurisdictions in our region. The assignments that the Commission's staff took on and accomplished during the past program year, and reported in this Annual Activity Report, suggest that another item be added to this mission: that of forging connections.

The nature of the SSCRPC's work is often, and perhaps even fundamentally, a connecting one which stretches from the very formal to the informal.

Our most formal responsibilities that require the forging of connections occur due to our role in regulatory processes. For example, the Commission serves as the entry point for land development projects going through both the County's and City of Springfield's land subdivision processes. The Commission's staff must communicate and connect with developers, the members of the Commission's Land Subdivision Committee and others to ensure that

this work is done.

We also must be cognizant of the importance of connecting with others as we go about our various planning assignments. This report includes many examples of work where these connections are necessary, including the development of the Regional Comprehensive Plan, assistance to the Citizens' Efficiency Commission, the work that we do on municipal comprehensive plans, and such special and important assignments as the development of the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan and the rural transit plan. The very work that Commission staff does to coordinate and assist the Springfield Area Transportation Study is emblematic of the Commission's connecting role.

And this also means that the Commission must form connections with the public we serve. The entire purpose of transportation planning, for example, is to find efficient and effective ways to link the places where people live to places where they work, are educated, are entertained, obtain goods and services, and so much more. The development of a transportation network is fundamentally one of forging connections.

But other connections must also be formed with the public, and as this year's report notes, during the past program year the Commission's staff has been attentive to the need to find new and better ways to provide the public with the information it needs and to make our work and processes more transparent.

As this report demonstrates, each of the Planning Commission's program areas take on and successfully complete many tasks and projects each year. This is not an insignificant task for many reasons. For example, the staff must accomplish this across multiple different fiscal years (the State, County, Federal Government and City of Springfield all have different fiscal years) and as many as a dozen project years, all of which have different reporting and closing dates as well as different performance requirements. Internal programmatic connections are required.

And at the same time, the Commission, particularly its senior staff, is called upon to take part in, assist with and connect with multiple other organizations. The list of organizations and entities listed on page 14 of this report with which we work clearly demonstrates the degree to which this occurs.

During the past year this effort and its coordination did not occur due to administrative slight-of-hand on the part of management, but through the initiative, creativity and positive attitude maintained by the Commission's staff. They have actively worked to connect our internal "silos" in order to provide the products described herein, and found new ways to connect the fruits of this work with the leaders we serve as well as the people in Sangamon County.



Respectfully submitted, E. Norman Sims Executive Director, SSCRPC June 19, 2013

Connecting People Through Transportation: Long Range Transportation Planning

Connecting for Transportation Planning: SATS

As noted to the right, the SSCRPC's work in transportation is done through the Springfield Area Transportation Study. SATS works through two committees, a Policy and a Technical Committee, which have both voting and non-voting members.

The Policy Committee's voting members include Springfield's Mayor, the Sangamon County Board Chairman, the President of the Village of Chatham, the IDOT District 6 Engineer, the Chairman of the Springfield Mass Transit District, and the Chairman of the SSCRPC.

As voting members, the Technical Committee includes representatives of the same jurisdictions and organizations.

Numerous other federal, state and local transportation-related agencies and entities are included on one or both of these committees as non-voting members. This includes, for example, IDOT's Office of Planning and Programming Metropolitan Planning Manager, Federal Highway Illinois Division Planning, Environment and ROW Team Leader, IDOT District 6 Local Roads and Streets Project Implementation Engineer, Executive Director of the Springfield Airport Authority, and Administrator of the Illinois Commerce Commission's Rail Safety Program.

One of the Commission's significant responsibilities each program year is to conduct the planning necessary to address the transportation needs of the public. In a very real way this planning concretely affects residents in the region, helping to ensure that workers are connected to jobs, students to their schools, consumers to goods and services, businesses to sources of sale and supply, farmers to their markets, public safety workers to those in critical situations, and so much more.

This part of the SSCRPC's work is done through the Springfield Area Transportation Study (SATS), which is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the area. The Commission provides staff and analytic support to SATS and is a voting member of the SATS Policy and Technical committees.

The Long Range Transportation Plan

Ensuring that efforts to address the transportation needs in the Metropolitan Planning Area are well planned is accomplished through the SATS Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

The SATS 2035 LRTP was adopted in March 2010 and designated several projects to be undertaken or facilitated by Planning Commission staff. Many of these activities identified corridors of the road network that are critical to providing services, supporting other elements of the transportation system, promoting safety, encouraging economic development, and ensuring system connectivity.

Assessing Transportation Connections

To put this information in a format that is useful for planning

purposes, during the past program year a database was created that identifies the attributes of the road network based upon priorities identified in the LRTP. This database, when fully populated with the relevant data, will indicate whether or not each road segment demonstrates any of the following attributes:

- Contains
 a "missing link" in the network that if filled would provide essential connections in
 the transportation infrastructure.
- Includes a location or locations showing a high crash rate.
- Is a part of the National Highway System.
- Provides a corridor connecting to an SSCRPC identified Economic Activity Center.
- Is a critical route for the transportation of agricultural products.
- Is part of the network to support emergency response.
- Is part of the transportation infrastructure that is available to support future development.
- Contains part of the SATS approved Envisioned Bicycle Network and/or a part of the Route 66 Bicycle Trail.
- Is a part of the SATS approved Priority Pedestrian
- Is part of the Springfield Mass Transit District's (SMTD) mainline route system.



The database will also include information concerning:

- The functional classification of the roadway.
- The average daily traffic volume of the roadway.
- The urban/rural designation of the roadway.

SSCRPC staff continues to expand the data and transportation research available to SATS for prioritizing projects and creating sound planning decisions. This research and analytic capacity is not only helpful for transportation planning purposes, but is directly relevant to such other SSCRPC tasks as assisting local communities with their comprehensive land use planning and the consideration of economic growth strategies and goals for the region.

Moreover, we believe that databases such as the one described above will be critical to the establishment of transportation performance measures as called for in the new federal transportation act: MAP-21.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections

For any transportation network to function effectively there must be connectivity; the provision of continuous and intersecting corridors of travel. Accomplishing this at the regional level requires the coordination and cooperation of many independent jurisdictions. This becomes readily apparent when planning new transportation networks, and occurred this past program year as SSCRPC staff worked on the planning necessary to improve bicycling and walking opportunities in the planning area.

Connecting the Urban Area

In August, 2012, the Springfield Area Transportation Study adopted the first Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Metropolitan Planning Area. The steering committee for this plan's development included representatives from municipal jurisdictions (Springfield, Chatham, Jerome, Rochester, Sherman), Sangamon County, the Springfield Mass Transit District, the Springfield Park District, the Springfield Bicycle Advisory Council, the Regional Office of Education, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), and even the medical community.

By the close of the program year most of the participating jurisdictions had adopted the plan, but the implementation of it will take many years. However, by working together — connecting — the participating jurisdictions will be developing intra— and inter-community connections for safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian travel.

Connecting Urban Areas to Rural

Because SATS funding is designated for the Metropolitan Planning Area, the bicycle and pedestrian plan was limited to its boundaries. However, travel networks do not stop at such arbitrary lines. Knowing this, the SSCRPC worked to secure a grant to develop a bicycle and pedestrian plan for the areas outside of the SATS planning boundaries with the intent of connecting the urban networks with more rural ones.

All rural communities were invited to participate with a steering committee for this purpose, and the villages of Buffalo, Illiopolis, Pleasant Plains, Thayer, Virden and Williams-

ville took part. As with the urban plan, the steering committee also included representatives of Sangamon County, IDOT, IDNR, and the Springfield Bicycle Club.

After reviewing citizen input obtained through three public engagement workshops, bike plans from adjacent counties, and considerations from each participant, a draft plan was prepared which will soon be available for public review.



Connecting Regions

To further expand bike network connectivity, the SSCRPC serves as a member of the Illinois Bike Plan Advisory Group, created by IDOT to assist in the creation of the first Illinois Bike Transportation Plan. The responsibilities of this group are to generate ideas, offer insights, build inter-agency support, and review the development of the State plan.

Connecting with the Public

But the SSCRPC's efforts in this area did not stop with planning, and efforts continue to improve the system and connect the public to it.

For example, to provide feedback for biking safety in the planning area, the SATS Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan established an objective to ensure that drainage grates are "bicycle-friendly". Because of this, the SSCRPC created a smart-device application that allows citizens to identify the location of drainage grates that are hazardous to bicyclists.

And to promote active transportation as an alternative to automobile travel, the SSCRPC, in collaboration with the Springfield Bicycle Advisory Council and many other community partners, sponsored the 6th Annual Curb You Car promotion during Bike to Work week, May 13-18, 2013.





Connecting Rural to Urban: The Sangamon/Menard Area Regional Transit Plan

The Planning Commission staff along with the Sangamon County Board and others, have long seen the need to improve transportation for those who live in rural areas but must travel to more urban areas to have their needs met. Often those in need of transportation are elderly or have health problems, limiting their personal transportation options, or do not own a vehicle at all.

To address this need the Sangamon County Board began an effort to create a regional transit system, which ultimately was expanded to include residents of Menard County, and asked the SSCRPC to assist in its planning.

During the 2012-13 program year Commission staff continued to assist in the effort to provide transit service to a greater number of residents of the region. Creation of the Sangamon/Menard Area Regional Transit (SMART) service was the result, and it is slowly evolving through the coordinated efforts of the two counties and the Springfield Mass Transit District, and with the support of the Illinois Department of Transportation,

many citizens, and other communities and agencies.

Senior Services of Central Illinois was selected to run the system with some services provided by Menard Senior Transport. The service will be available to the general public and will provide connections within and between Sangamon and Menard counties with the opportunity to connect to transit services available in surrounding counties. To use the system, passengers will call to reserve a ride and will be picked up at a location of their choosing and taken directly to their desired destination. The service will be

available throughout all of Menard County, and in Sangamon County if at least one end of the requested trip is outside of the Springfield Mass Transit District boundaries.

Thanks to a grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation, Planning Commission staff created illustrative design concepts for transfer centers/bus stops that could be used to facilitate transfers to connect with other transit services. This would allow for a more efficient use of SMART vehicles. Sangamon County is pursuing the development of these transfer centers.

Other Transportation Planning Related Activities of Note During the Program Year

- 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program.
- 2012 Downtown Springfield Parking Survey.
- PY 2014 Unified Planning Work Program.
- FY 2012 Annual Listing of Federally Obligated Projects.
- 2013 Public Participation Plan.
- Long Range Transportation Plan Progress Reports.
- Springfield Area Transportation Study secretariat support.
- SMTD schedule updates.



Connecting With Smaller Communities to Improve Transportation

During the past program year the Planning Commission placed additional emphasis on how it might assist smaller communities. These communities often have unique needs that are not being met by large state or national programs, seldom have the staff resources to undertake planning activities on their own, and may be forgotten as the needs of larger communities appear as lead stories in the media causing shifts in fund availability.

This being the case, the SSCRPC continued two efforts during the year to assist these small communities.

Connecting Communities to Improve Signage

Recent changes in federal regulations required that communities improve their traffic signage so that the signs would come into compliance with higher reflectivity standards to assist drivers at night.

The SSCRPC staff brought the smaller communities in the Metropolitan Planning Area together, engaging them in a joint effort to bring their signage into compliance with the new standards through a consolidated grant application and award.

The award was made and SSCRPC staff continue to assist with this joint effort.

Transportation Planning Micro-Grants

During the previous program year the SSCRPC offered a pilot program to provide planning microgrants to smaller Sangamon County communities. Three awards were made for the creation of pavement preservation plans and traffic data collection. Due to the pilot's success, the program was again offered this year, with the Village of Rochester awarded a grant of \$5,600 to create an Updated Roadway Database, Two-Year Priority List for Street Maintenance, Pavement Preservation Plan, and Plan for Roadway Expansion and Maintenance.

Connecting Communities Regionally: Regional Comprehensive Plan

The Sangamon Regional Plan is a major multi-year SSCRPC initiative requiring the active involvement of municipalities in the region. Jurisdictions representing 98% of the County's population have passed resolutions supporting their participation in the regional planning effort, and the chief elected officials of these municipalities serve on the plan's steering committee.

Due to the extensive work that needs to be done to complete a project such as this one, the effort was planned to be conducted in five phases. Nearly all of the work on the first three phases of the project was completed prior to the current SSCRPC program year. Phase I involved the organization of the communities into a "planning alliance" as well as the establishment of five study groups assessing the region's strengths and weaknesses. Phase 2 involved the development of background information through the work of the study groups, including assessments pertaining to: environment and natural resources; economy and technology development; transportation and public infrastructure; housing and neighborhoods; and, heritage, recreational and cultural amenities.

In conjunction with Houseal-Lavigne Associates, Phase 3 included a number of public engagement activities to seek comments related to the findings of the study groups and input into the plan. This effort included public workshops, student workshops, focus groups, and meetings with business leaders, government officials and community groups. It also included the innovative use of new technologies that allowed residents to make comments for the plan through on-line interactive mapping and questionnaires.

At the start of the 2012-13 program year, Houseal-Lavigne submitted its final Phase 3 report. Building on this report, the SSCRPC engaged the Lakota

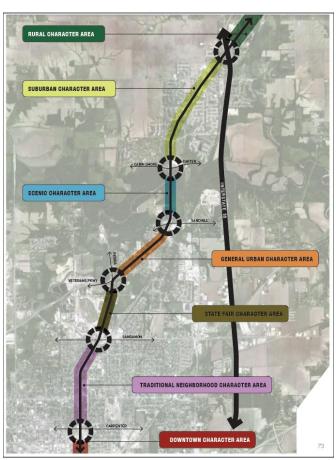
Group to assist with Phase 4 of the plan.

Phase 4 involves the synthesis of all of the regional comprehensive plan work done to date — work of the study groups and public input — into a planning framework that will form the vision for the regional plan in coming years. This framework emphasizes the following principles which frame plan goals:

- Build resilient communities through intentional growth.
- Preserve and enhance important regional amenities and resources.
- Improve regional mobility.
- Achieve a regional planning vision through collaboration.
- Build the capacity of local communities to plan and implement.

To develop regional strategies and recommend implementation actions, Phase 4 then applies these principles to focal areas related to: Community Character and Growth; Heritage, Cultural and Recreational Resources; Transportation and Public Infrastructure; Agricultural and Rural Communities; Economic Development and Regional Readiness; and, Government Efficiency and Cooperation. The plan addresses the presumed impact and importance of each planning strategy and implementation action, and identifies the probable key players and facilitators for the various actions. At the close of the current program year, the Lakota Group had submitted drafts of the Phase 4 plan for SSCRPC staff review, and was in the process of incorporating feedback to finalize the plan: a culmination of many years' work by the Planning Commission.

In terms of connectivity, some of the key goals arising from the Regional Comprehensive Plan are notable as they include connec-



Example of corridor and entryway "character mapping" for Sangamon Regional Plan.

tivity and the incorporation of scenic corridors into the region's planning and transportation priorities. The SSCRPC has, therefore, paid special attention to corridor designs for inclusion as a component of the plan, working with the Lakota Group to develop plans for such important inter-connecting corridors as Clear Lake Avenue and Peoria Road as they enter the City of Springfield.

The effort also creates corridor plans applicable to any number of the "main streets" in the smaller cities and villages in Sangamon County. These efforts demonstrate the particular importance of the regional plan in pulling together and connecting different parts of the region as well as the special aspects and strengths of its communities.

Making Connections Within Communities: Municipal Comprehensive Plan Assistance







During the 2012-13 program year the SSCRPC staff continued to encourage municipalities without comprehensive plans to develop them, or review and update them.

Local comprehensive plans most

often operate within a 20-year planning cycle, so a plan prepared in 2013 would look out toward 2033. Since this planning "horizon" is a lengthy one, the SSCRPC encourages municipalities with comprehensive plans to keep them upto-date by reviewing their plans every five years, and updating them every 10.

This is because a well-developed and current plan helps the community identify where and how growth needs will be met, provides guidance for the development of public amenities such as parks and trails, provides for an expected level of environmental and neighborhood quality, helps ensure that public investments in infrastructure are based upon identified needs and are coordinated, and provides a consistent

basis for land use and governmental decision making.

In support of a goal to increase the number of communities in Sangamon County that have current comprehensive plans, the Commission assists communities in plan development and even provides some financial support for this work.

When assisting a community with this planning, the SSCRPC staff works with local leaders to conduct land use inventories and analysis, environmental assessments and utility studies, population and growth analysis, and studies transportation, circulation and community facility needs before working with them to develop the local goals, policies and objectives that are critical to the creation of a land use map.

In addition to its work with local leaders, the SSCRPC staff conducts extensive community outreach to ensure that residents in the community are fully engaged in the creation of their plan.

Because of the staff requirement involved in working with a community in the development of a comprehensive plan, the SSCRPC typically limits its work to one community per program year. During this past program year the Commission began work with the City of Leland Grove, and this work is nearing completion.

Leland Grove represents a unique situation for comprehensive planning because it is already fully developed as a residential community and surrounded by two other municipalities that could affect Leland Grove's character. Therefore the SSCRPC particularly looked to address the impact that decisions by these other jurisdictions might have on Leland Grove, and how Leland Grove might connect to the surrounding communities so as to maintain its strong residential character through the creation of attractive amenities and appropriate investments in infrastructure.

Even though the Commission limits the number of comprehensive planning projects it can address at any one time, the staff continuously works to strengthen relationships with municipal leaders and lay the groundwork for future planning and capacity-building. For example, conversations with the Village of Riverton are in process as the next community in the comprehensive planning "pipeline".

Other Strategic & Comprehensive Planning Related Activities of Note During the Program Year

- Update of the SangStat Regional Index.
- IGO Car Sharing Feasibility Analysis data development.
- Transportation
 Efficiency and Effectiveness Best Practice Survey.

Connecting Communities With Information and Analysis

The SSCRPC noticed during the past program year that many of the local governments with which it works struggle to collect the data necessary to adequately gauge their performance or target areas where local government



capacity might be improved. Because of this, during the 2012-13 program year the SSCRPC staff turned its attention to a number of efforts intended to lay the groundwork for needed data collection activities.

As part of this, the SSCRPC's regional benchmarking tool, Sang-Stat, was updated. This tool is expected to be expanded in partnership with the Sangamon County Community Foundation's recent community survey which is being done in partnership with the University of Illinois at Springfield's Survey Research Office.

SSCRPC staff also continued to provide information concerning local demographic and economic

trends to local officials and the public.

Targeted geographic areas have also received attention in terms of both benchmarking and basic demographic and economic data. For example, work was conducted for a market analysis of the area immediately surrounding the intersection of Cook Street and Martin Luther King Ir. Drive. SSCRPC staff finds data collection and analysis such as this to be particularly important in helping local governments and their officials better understand long-term needs so that more informed decisions can be made.

Assistance to the Citizens' Efficiency Commission: Connecting Better Service to Lower Cost

In 2010 the Sangamon County Board placed an advisory referendum on the general election ballot to establish a volunteer citizen body tasked with examining the efficiency and effectiveness of local government in the region so that recommendations could be made for improvements. There was significant public support for this effort, with over 62% of voters favoring the establishment of the first Citizens' Efficiency Commission (CEC) for Sangamon County.

Because of its unique multijurisdictional role, under the establishing resolution the SSCRPC was tasked with providing staff and organizational support for the effort, a responsibility ultimately approved by vote of the members of the Planning Commission.

Since the CEC's inception, the SSCRPC's staff has assisted in the CEC's research, analyzed the fruits of this research, and helped the CEC with its numerous formal reports and recommendations. During the past program year this required the SSCRPC staff to assist the CEC with the coordination and development of the many research projects that the CEC members requested.

As part of this research, and in order to obtain the advice and input of residents and public officials, the CEC also received the assistance of SSCRPC staff in conducting outreach efforts through the local media and numerous public outreach sessions.

The results of this work are already helping local governments in the county provide better services at lower costs. For example, a number of townships have eliminated their collectors' positions and citizens are expected to see direct savings through electric aggregation coordinated by the 15 municipal jurisdictions in the County that have connected for this purpose.

But other efforts were also undertaken with the assistance of the SSCRPC staff that show the value of making connections, and three are highlighted here.

Sangamon County Leadership Council Start-Up

During the program year the SSCRPC staff took an active role in achieving the first of the CEC's recommendations: the bringing together of local government leaders to improve inter-jurisdictional communication. This initiative highlights the value of the on-going goal to improve community connectivity by bringing together the region's mayors and village presidents for the first time. This strengthened the efforts of the SSCRPC staff as they worked with many of these leaders in the development of the Regional Comprehensive Plan. We believe that this helps demonstrate how planning actions are brought together to create additional intra-region connectivity.

Toward the end of the 2012-13 program year the SSCRPC staff continued this work at the request of the municipal officials in the region, working to help them draft by-laws to more formally establish the group as a Countywide Leadership Council. It is expected that this action will have a lasting impact in terms of improving communication and cooperation among and between the municipalities and special districts in the area.

Leadership Springfield Project Support

Another CEC initiative assisted by the SSCRPC became a project for a 2012-13 Leadership Springfield Team. The CEC proposed a project to examine local government procurement. SSCRPC staff as-



sisted Leadership Springfield in becoming acclimated to the issue, making necessary connections to the relevant local governments, and generating data needed for the analysis. As a result, the Leadership Springfield group produced a local procurement guidebook and directory, and increased marketing for a Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce local procurement portal that local governments can access to better coordinate such purchases as road materials, street signage and office supplies.

Metropolitan Planning Organization Best Practices Survey

In conjunction with the CEC, the SSCRPC staff also worked to develop a nationwide survey of other Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to connect the innovative practices they identify to the CEC. This survey will assist the CEC's Public Works committee by providing it with additional information about best local practices in transportation planning, funding and construction from a national pool of jurisdictions, and will also guide the SSCRPC in reference to transportation planning and programming, problematic state and federal mandates, and efficiency priorities identified by peers throughout the nation. For this effort, survey design, the collection of MPO contact information, and survey deployment were all addressed by SSCRPC staff.

Citizens' Efficiency Commission Reports Produced During the Program Year

General Research Reports:

- General Local Government Functions.
- Philosophy and Recommendations.
- Comparison of Special Districts.
- Comparison of Costs of Local Government in Peer Counties.
- History and Nature of Joint Services in Sangamon County.
- Positive Local Efforts.
- Preliminary Report: Sangamon County Municipal Leader Interviews.

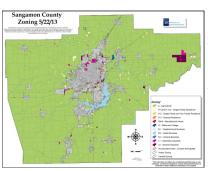
Interim Report:

 First Year Progress Report: Putting Efficiency on the Map.

Formal Recommendation Reports:

- Leaders' Peer Networks.
- Township General Assistance Administration.
- Electric Aggregation.
- Township Property Tax Collection.
- Regional Joint Purchasing.
- Inventoried and Shared Road Maintenance Equipment.
- Energy Efficiency.
- Foreign Fire Insurance Funding.
- Higher Education Cooperation.

Zoning & Tract Survey Review: Connecting People & Land



Planning Commission staff review zoning petitions for the City of Springfield and Sangamon County, and the Executive Director also oversees the Sangamon County Department of Zoning.

Zoning Activity

For each zoning case, staff must review the petition, conduct a site visit, identify surrounding uses, assess compliance with the relevant comprehensive plan, determine if the requirements of the ordinances are met, and complete a staff analysis including professional recommendations.

During the past year Commission staff saw a significant increase in the number of zoning petitions. This program year 172 zoning cases were reviewed and staff opinions provided. This is an increase of almost 19% compared to last year, when 145 cases were reviewed. This results in an average of over 14 zoning cases per month.

Most notable was the increase in City cases, up from 81 last program year to 111 this year, for an increase of 37%, with the most significant increase occurring during the last quarter of calendar year 2012. SSCRPC staff attributes this increase to some turn-around in the local economy and the continuation of low interest rates, which resulted in new commercial development and homeowners making improvements to their properties.

Wind Energy Conversion Systems

During the past program year the Planning Commission staff also assisted the Sangamon County Board with another matter of local importance: the review and updating of the County's Wind Energy Conversion System (windfarm) ordinance. To assist the County, the SSCRPC staff undertook a review of the existing ordinance in light of practices in other areas, took part in several public meetings on the issue where public input was obtained,

and ultimately provided suggestions for improving the ordinance. These changes were adopted by the Sangamon County Board.

Zoning Workshop

To help improve zoning practice in the County, the Planning Commission worked with the County's Zoning Office and the Office of the State's Attorney to conduct the County's first zoning workshop in over 10 years to educate local decision-makers concerning zoning law, practice and process.

Tract Surveys

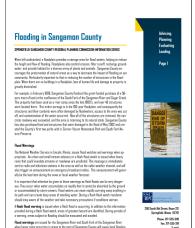
A number of the zoning petitions filed were requests to vary the ordinances to allow for divisions of land. The Executive Director of the SSCRPC also serves as the County Plat Officer and reviews tract surveys for approval.

Between June I, 2012, and May 24, 2013, the SSCRPC had reviewed and approved I16 tract surveys; a decline of about 6% compared to the previous year.

Other Land Use Planning Related Activities of Note During the Program Year

- Assistance to the Village of Curran in development of a draft zoning ordinance.
- Staff assistance to the Sangamon County Historic Preservation Commission.

Creating Linkages for Better Floodplain Management



One of the important responsibilities of the Commission is to act as Floodplain Administrator for Sangamon County, the City of Springfield, and some villages. On a weekly basis the Commission's staff handles numerous requests from property owners, insurance agents, mortgage lenders and others regarding the locations of areas in the County that are prone to flooding, and to make determinations as to whether or not a property is located in the Federal Emergency Man-

agement Agency (FEMA) designated floodplain.

Sangamon County participates in

the FEMA Community Rating System program. Participation in the program is based upon an evaluation of the community's floodplain regulations, level of educational outreach, response to flooding events, timely response to inquiries, floodplain development activities, and other areas of floodplain management.

During this year's annual evaluation, and thanks to the SSCRPC's staff work, Sangamon County received approval for continuation in the program at the current Level 8 rating. This is a high rating that results in property owners who are required to purchase flood insurance receiving a 5% to 10% discount on their flood insurance premiums under the National

Flood Insurance Program.

In addition to serving as an informational resource, the Commission also reviews any Floodplain **Development Permit applications** submitted by property owners seeking to alter the topography or construct a structure in the floodplain and issues permits. Three floodplain development permits were issued this year, representing a slight decrease of one permit compared to last year. In addition, there are several projects that were started under permits last program year which continued into this program year. Typically a reduction in permits or few permits granted is attributable to a well-managed floodplain permitting regime.

Connecting Growth to Public Needs Through Development Analysis & Review

A large part of the Commission's effort centers around the analysis and review of land development projects in Springfield and the unincorporated portions of Sangamon County. The SSCRPC's responsibilities are spelled out in local ordinances related to land subdivision, large-scale development or planned unit development, and largely done through the work of the Commission's staff and its Land Subdivision Committee.

Development Analysis & Review

From June 1, 2012, through May 2, 2013, the Commission reviewed 55 development project plans. This represents an average of about 4.5 projects per month and is an increase of 31% over the previous period last program year.

This included review of:

- 9 Location and Sketch Maps.
- I I Preliminary Plans.
- 15 Final Plats.
- 4 Site Development Plans.
- 8 Large Scale Plans.
- 3 Partial Plats of Vacation.
- 5 variances absent a plan.

This number of projects is the largest number of development reviews shown in an SSCRPC annual report since June 2008. As with the interpretation of the zoning petition data previously reported, the Commission staff believes that this is due to continuing improvement in the local economy as well as continued low interest rates.

Revisions to the Springfield Land Subdivision Ordinance

In conjunction with the City of Springfield's Office of Public Works, the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, and representatives of the local development community, the SSCRPC staff



met periodically over the past five years to discuss revisions to the City's Land Subdivision Ordinance.

The changes identified, which were approved by the Springfield City Council this program year, improve the efficiency of the land subdivision process, but more importantly improve the transparency of that process for the public. In addition to requiring that more detailed comments be provided to applicants prior to Land Subdivision Committee meetings, the new language also requires that SSCRPC's development planning staff post signs at development sites so that the public is aware that the property is undergoing Location and Sketch Map review as conventional subdivisions or as Large Scale Develop-

Recently the Springfield City Council approved further changes to the ordinance, which moved some Land Subdivision deadlines up by one week and expedites the review of Final Plats of subdivision.

Changes in the Sangamon County Land Subdivision Ordinance

Over the past several years the Planning Commission staff has championed the use of new technologies to improve office efficiency and effectiveness, but also to improve the public's access to information. Several new uses of technology are addressed on the following page, but one of these activities involved the digitizing of land development plans that were in the past only available in hard — paper-based — form in the Commission's files.

This past year the Planning Commission staff proposed, and the Sangamon County Board adopt ed, a change in the County's Land Subdivision ordinance that requires that land development plans be submitted in electronic as well as paper-based form. This follows a change in code already adopted by the City of Springfield.

Other Development Planning Related Activities of Note During the Program Year

- Completion of East Springfield Commercial Redevelopment Plan.
- Lincoln Funeral Processional route mapping.
- Assistance to the City of Springfield in the development of the Springfield Arterial Roadway Network Plan.
- Natural Resources Inventory Update and Mapping Project.

Connecting People to Planning Through Technology

As mentioned previously, the Planning Commission believes that the utilization of technology can offer improvements in staff effectiveness and efficiency, but more importantly can provide for wider access to planning information and greater transparency. For these reasons the Commission's staff worked toward providing some new web-based applications during the past program year.



SSCRPC staff visually inspected conditions in the downtown during the past year. The resulting downtown inventory database will help future information seekers and economic development efforts.

Downtown Inventory Database

One of the important projects undertaken by the SSCRPC staff during the 2012-13 program year was a GIS-based mapping of parcels in the Springfield downtown TIF area. But this project was more than a simple mapping, as it included an inventory of all of the parcels in the downtown across a number of data dimensions, and the creation of a database representing facts concerning each parcel. This project was only possible due to funding provided to the Commission by the City of Springfield's Office of Planning and Economic Development. The database developed serves several purposes, including answering calls from the public and providing valuable information that will help in downtown redevelopment and revitalization efforts.

Collecting data for the project took nearly four months. SSCRPC staff conducted many days of field work, walking the streets of the study area, observing building exteriors and parcel development factors, and manually entering data on items of note, including, but

not limited to, number of building stories, building conditions, and uses by floor. The study team digitally photographed each parcel to document what the buildings and other improvements looked like in the spring and summer of 2012. Staff combined the fieldwork data gathered with the photographs as well as existing paper and electronic data resources provided by the City, County and others to create a 681-parcel database in ArcGIS.

After completing data collection, the project team prepared a report summarizing the data collected. This report, which is available on the Commission's website, describes the area's land use, zoning and relationship to the City's comprehensive land use plan. It also provides a detailed examination of the area's existing conditions across a number of data fields. The report continues with maps that contain information on such factors as land use, building conditions, and location of façade easements and condominium units. It finishes with a spreadsheet detailing parcel-specific information pulled from the database.

At the time of this report, the SSCRPC was working to bring the information gathered from the inventory to the next level, creating an on-line mapping and data tool that will be available on the Commission's website.

Project Locator

One of the important efforts that the Commission's staff has undertaken is the development of an on-line Project Locator. The Project Locator is intended to provide a tool that may be used by local officials, developers and the general public to track land development projects reviewed by the Commission.

This tool, available on the SSCRPC website, will allow users to identify current and past projects that have been the subject of land sub-

division development review, and by "clicking" on a site identified on the map, obtain access to digital copies of the plans as they go through the process. These plans — be they Location and Sketch Maps, Preliminary Plans, Final Plats, Large Scale Development Plans, or others — may then be downloaded to the user's personal computer for detailed review.

This application is now available on the Commission's website under the Land Development and Subdivision Planning program tab.

County Zoning Map On-Line

Over the years one of our most often heard requests is for the Commission to provide an on-line digital version of the Sangamon County zoning map. Access to such a map is of interest to the general public and developers, but it is also a valuable resource requested by appraisers, bankers, insurance companies and others.

During the past program year the Planning Commission staff completed that project and now provides such a map on the Commission's website. Currently it can be found on the Commission's front page, but it is also available under the "Reports, Publications & Maps" portion of the Public Involvement tab.

At the present time the digital map only provides for the zoning district classification of property, and does not identify conditional permitted uses or variances that have been granted for a parcel. The Planning Commission staff continues to work on a database, tied to the digital zoning map, that will allow users to also access this information.

Additional improvements are expected to be made in all three of these systems over time.

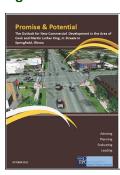
Connecting Planning to Economic Growth and Development

While the Planning Commission does not serve as economic developer for the region, it is often called upon to provide economic development planning assistance to client jurisdictions. Three projects completed by Planning Commission staff during the past year illustrate the nature of this work.

Assessment of a New Commercial Development Area in East Springfield

At the request of the City of Springfield, in October 2012 SSCRPC staff completed an analysis of

the develop-



ment potential of the area adjacent to the intersection of Cook and Martin Luther King, Jr. streets. This work was conducted subsequent to another redevelopment planning effort in which the Commission played a role; redevelopment planning for the area adjacent to Dirksen Parkway, Cook St. and South Grand Ave.

The report (Promise and Potential: The Outlook for New Commercial Development in the Area of Cook and Martin Luther King, Jr. Streets in Springfield, Illinois) developed as an outcome of this assignment. It considered this transportation node in light of the trade area that surrounds it, the demographics of the local neighborhood market area, and its viability for commercial redevelopment. One of the unique aspects of the study was that SSCRPC staff provided an illustrative design for development at the node based upon the study's findings and conclusions.

The study found that this area was viable for commercial redevelopment and could become an important component of the Hope Neighborhood project.

City of Springfield Community Profile

While some might think of economic development as more glamorous than some



other responsibilities of government, much of the work that must be done to support the function is data driven, requiring that communities have in hand the information that developers and businesses need to make informed decisions. This is often accomplished through community profiles that provide data about the area.

During the past program year the Planning Commission assisted the City of Springfield in that regard, updating the profile that the City provides to businesses, site location consultants, and others.

The new Springfield Community Profile provides information on 50 site location factors, in many cases providing forecasts as well as current data.

Inventory of Existing Potential Industrial Development Sites

For many reasons the identification of sites suitable for industrial development is an important and difficult one. The sites often have special infrastructure needs, must be located such that transport to and from the site is efficient, and must be located away from many typical land uses. All of this means that the development of new sites can be expensive, and can be controversial if conflicts with neighboring uses occur.

So when the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce's Q5 initiative began to discuss the need for the development of new sites, the Planning Commission asked why existing sites did not fit current needs. What Commission staff discovered was that no inventory of existing sites suitable for industrial development existed. That being the case, Commission staff developed an inventory of potential, and existing, industrial sites located in Springfield and unincorporated Sangamon County.

The Commission staff began by identifying all of the properties currently zoned for industrial use and reviewed certain locational factors important to this use (e.g., access to interstate highways, existing road access to the site, presence of water and electricity on or adjacent to the site, the extent to which the site was in floodplain, and so forth).

By reviewing aerial photographs of each identified site, the SSCRPC staff was then able to determine the degree to which the site was already in use as well as any geographic or other features that may make the site unsuitable.

After reviewing scores of parcels, the Planning Commission identified six vacant sites of 20 acres or more, seven that were predominately vacant, and six more that were partially vacant. These 19 existing sites were all found to be suitable for industrial de-



velopment, and the Commission noted that there are other sites available that are already in industrial use but in need of redevelopment.

Volunteers & Interns Assist the SSCRPC



While the SSCRPC staff work very hard to carry out their duties, the level of work taken on by the Commission this past program year could not have been accomplished without an amazing cast of active volunteers and outstanding interns.

A complete listing of all of the volunteers who assisted in Commission activities during the past program year would significantly lengthen this report. However, it

is important to note the work of those whose assistance was critical to the success of the Commission's many tasks.

For example, the Citizen's Efficiency Commission is successfully conducting its work by virtue of the 23 committed local citizens who serve, as well as the

other citizens who have volunteered their own time to assist the CEC with logistics, research and data collection. These included such community volunteers as Marilyn Cagnoni, Kiran Desai, Jake Ferguson, Carol Kulek and Stephen Schnorf, as well as student interns Richard Bennett, Margaret Long and Lyndee Rodamaker.

We would also note the assistance of student intern Justin Keenan, who was instrumental in the development of the industrial site area review and mapping project mentioned on the previous page.

It is also important to note those who assisted with the Commission's *Curb Your Car* event. This includes Barb Bonansinga, Bill Donels, Mark Forinash, Steve Hamlin, Michael Higgins, Robert La-Bonte, Lynn Miller and Mary Rogers.

In addition to the other items mentioned, during the program year Commission staff provided such assistance as:

- Helping various agencies and organizations with their mapping and other information requests.
- Staffing the Sangamon County Historic Preservation Commission and serving on and assisting the Springfield Historic Sites Commission.
- Advising communities on the development of zoning and other land-related ordinances.
- Assisting small communities in comprehensive plan pre-planning activities.
- Assisting communities with problem solving and policy analysis.

COMMISSION LEADERSHIP FOR PY 2012-2013:

Membership on the SSCRPC is established in Section 2.36.020 of the Sangamon County Code of Ordinances. This section creates a 17 member board to be made up of Elected Officials (the Chairman of the Sangamon County Board; the Chairs of the County's Finance Committee and Public Health, Solid Waste and Zoning Committee; the Mayor of the City of Springfield; and two Springfield Aldermen to be appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council), Special District representatives (the chief presiding officers of the Springfield Park District, Springfield Airport Authority, Springfield Metro Sanitary District, Springfield Mass Transit District, and the Regional Superintendent of Schools), and Appointed Citizens (three citizen members appointed by the Chairman of the County Board and confirmed by that board, and three citizen members of the Springfield Planning and Zoning Commission appointed by the Springfield Mayor and confirmed by the City Council).

Section 2.36.040 of the County's code allows the elected officials and the chief presiding officers to select an alternate representative who may serve on the Commission in their absence.

2012-2013 SSCRPC Officers and Members of the Executive Policy Board:

Mr. Eric Hansen, Chair, Citizen Member, Sangamon Co.

Mr. Bill Moss, Vice-Chair, Citizen Member, Springfield.

Mr. Kenneth Springs, Secretary, Citizen Member, Sangamon Co.

Hon. Mike Houston, Mayor, City of Springfield (Mr. Mike Farmer).

Hon. Andy Van Meter, Chairman, Sangamon Co. Board (Mr. Brian McFadden).

Mr. Dick Ciotti, Chairman, Springfield Metro Sanitary District (Mr. Gregg Humphrey).

Mr. Brad Mills, Member-at-Large, Citizen Member, Springfield.

Other Commission Members:

Mr. Brian Brewer, Chairman, Springfield Mass Transit District (Mr. Frank Squires).

Hon. Sam Cahnman, Alderman, Springfield (Mr. Joe Davis).

Hon. Andy Goleman, Member, Sangamon Co. Board (Mr. Charlie Stratton).

Mr. Larry Hamlin, Citizen Member, Sangamon Co.

Hon. Cory Jobe, Alderman, Springfield

Mr. Jeff Vose, Regional Superintendent of Schools (Ms. Shannon Fehrholz/Mr. Lyle Wind).

Ms. Leslie Sgro, President, Springfield Park District (Mr. Elliott McKinley).

Mr. Bruce Strom, Citizen Member, Springfield.

Hon. Greg Stumpf, Member, Sangamon Co. Board.

Mr. Frank Vala, Chairman, Springfield Airport Authority (Mr. Roger Blickensderfer).

(Indicates member's officially designated representative).

Membership as of June 1, 2013.

Administrative Efforts: Connecting the Public to the SSCRPC

As this report demonstrates, during the past program year each of the Planning Commission's program areas noted the important role that the Commission plays in connecting to and linking with our municipal partners. But we also realized the importance of finding new and better ways to connect the public with what the Commission does: planning.

One of our critical tasks was to identify areas where we can be more effective in providing the public with the information it needs to better understand the forces at work in our region as well as the plans being made to address these forces. This report highlights several of them, but they are important enough to address again as similar efforts will drive many of our future administrative initiatives.

For example, during the past year staff updated and improved the Commission's web presence; the on-line gateway to the Commission's reports and information. They found ways to make information about properties in the Springfield downtown area available, make the public aware of projects going through the Land Subdivision process, and make County zoning information widely available on the internet. They started a new set of documents, Planning Matters, to

provide the public with our thinking about aspects of planning, what works and, sometimes, what doesn't work. And began to look at how the social media and smart devices might be used to make our work more transparent and available.

This requires that the SSCRPC staff have adequate access to technologies necessary for effective electronic communications and data delivery. From an administrative viewpoint, we believe that technology will be our primary vehicle in forming new and stronger connections between the public and the SSCRPC in the future.

FINANCES: Receipts and Disbursements (rounded to nearest dollar), December 1, 2011, through November 30, 2012. Does not include Sangamon County Department of Zoning.

RECEIPTS:

DISBURSEMENTS:

Sangamon County	332,652.00	Personnel	\$625,049.00
City of Springfield	169,771.00		. ,
Springfield Area Transportation Study		Part-time Personnel	00.00
State of Illinois (FHWA)	310,049.00	Boards & Committees	3,750.00
Sangamon County	31,184.00	Overtime	00.00
City of Springfield	31,184.00	Fringe Benefits	260,601.00
Village of Chatham	6,913.00	· ·	•
Mass Transit Study		Office Supplies	2,935.00
State of Illinois (FTA)	79,646.00	Toner & Ribbon	5,847.00
Spfld Mass Transit District	19,615.00	Printing	117.00
Marketing Materials (Work Task #314)		· ·	
Spfld Mass Transit District	24,930.00	Exempt Printing	497.00
Citizens' Efficiency Commission	15,000.00	Meetings & Dues	4,981.00
Central Area Inventory & Map. (OPED)	•	Travel & Mileage	1,106.00
Springfield Park District 1,500.00		Equipment Maintenance	4,288.00
Comprehensive Regional Planning Fur		• •	
Urban CRPF (IDOT)	91,230.00	Publications	5,128.00
Rural CRPF (IDOT)	11,932.00	Postage	2,469.00
CSO-LTCP Financial Capability		Contractual Services (Regular)	59,130.00
Assessment (SMSD)	3,465.00	, ,	
Energy Efficiency & Conservation		Contractual Services (Grant)	188,869.00
Block Grant (DCEO/ILARC)	132,201.00	Photocopier Program	1,572.00
Comp. Planning Village of Curran	5,974.00	New Equipment > \$500	1,294.00
School District Mapping (Reg. Super.)	2,250.00	New Equipment < \$500	653.00
Rural Transit/Transfer Study (State of I		• •	
Enos Park Plan Data-Mansur	2,000.00	Cost Allocation	147,962.00
Sub-District Remapping (School Dist. 1		Depreciation Expense	1,624.00
Interest Earned	504.00	TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$1,317,872.00
Reimbursed Expenses	520.00	As nor audit review conducted	
TOTAL RECEIPTS \$1,298,703.00		As per audit review conducted by Cameron, Smith	



& Company.



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Visit Us On The Web At www.sscrpc.com

About the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC)

The SSCRPC serves as the joint planning body for Sangamon County and the City of Springfield. It also works with other public and semi-public agencies throughout the area to promote orderly growth and redevelopment, and assists other Sangamon County communities with their planning needs.

Through its professional staff, the Commission provides overall planning services related to land use, housing, recreation, transportation, economic development, the environment, and special projects. The Commission prepares area-wide planning documents and assists the County, cities, and villages, as well as special districts, with planning activities. The staff reviews all proposed divisions of land and makes recommendations on all Springfield and Sangamon County zoning and variance requests. The agency serves as the Floodplain Administrator and local A-95 review clearinghouse to process and review all federally funded applications for the county.

The Commission has 17 members including representatives from the Sangamon County Board, Springfield City Council, special units of government, and six appointed citizens from the city and county. The Executive Director is appointed by the Executive Board of the Commission and confirmed by the Sangamon County Board.

The Executive Director also oversees the Sangamon County Department of Zoning and serves as Plats Officer for the County.

Planning Commission Staff (as of June 1, 2013)

Administrative

Norm Sims, Executive Director

Mary Jane Niemann, Account Technician and Operations Assistant

Jane Lewis, Clerk-Typist II

Development Planning

Joe Zeibert, Senior Planner, Development Planning

Steve Keenan, Principal Planner, Development Planning

Strategic & Comprehensive <u>Planning</u>

Jeff Fulgenzi, Senior Planner, Strategic & Comprehensive Planning

Amy Uden, Associate Planner, Policy Research & Analysis

Land Use Planning

Molly Berns, Senior Planner, Land Use Planning

Abby Bybee, Associate Planner, Land Use Planning

Transportation Planning

Linda Wheeland, Senior Planner, Transportation Planning

Dale Schultz, Principal Planner, Transportation Planning

Neha Soni, Associate Planner, Urban Design & Transportation Planning

Brian Sheehan, Transportation Planning Specialist

County Zoning Dept. Staff

Cyndi Knowles, Zoning Administrator

Brian Schackmann, Liquor Code Enforcement Officer

Trustin Harrison, Zoning Inspector

Diane Hurrelbrink, Administrative Secretary

The Sangamon County Building Springfield, Illinois

June 19, 2013, E. Norman Sims, Executive Director, SSCRPC

Primary Committees & Formal Linkages

Sangamon County: Public Health, Solid Waste and Zoning Committee; Historic Preservation Commission; Zoning Board of Appeals; Sangamon/Menard Area Regional Transit Oversight Committee; Sangamon Valley Local Emergency Planning Committee; Aerial Flyover Committee; Citizens' Efficiency Commission for Sangamon County.

City of Springfield: Historic Sites Commission; Planning and Zoning Commission; Springfield Bicycle Advisory Council.

SSCRPC: Executive Policy Board; Land Subdivision Committee; Springfield Area Transportation Study (Policy and Technical Committees).

State: Region 7 Rural Human Services Transportation Committee; Urbanized Area Human Services Transportation Planning Committee; Illinois Greenways and Trails Council; IDOT Performance Management Technical Advisory Group; IDOT South 6th Street Study Advisory Committee; IDOT I-55 Reconstruction Study Advisory Group; Illinois Bike Transportation Plan Advisory Group; Illinois Association of Regional Councils; Illinois Model Users Group; Illinois Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council; APA

Other: SMTD Disabled Persons Advisory Committee; Downtown Springfield Inc.; Quantum 5 Partnership Executive Council and Development Policy Committee; Central Illinois Economic Development Authority; Sangamon-Springfield Community Survey Steering Committee; Citizens Efficiency Commission; Lincoln Funeral Coalition Advisor; Team Project Steering Committee; American Planning Association.